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ALICE'S BLIGHTED  
PROFESSION

A SKETCH FOR GIRLS

By HELEN C. CLIFFORD

Fitzgerald Publishing Corporation  
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DARKEY BREACH OF PROMISE CASE. Mock Trial.....		22
GREAT LIBEL CASE. Mock Trial; 1 Scene; 2 hours.....		21
RIDING THE GOAT. Burlesque Initiation; 1 Scene; 1½ hours		24

FITZGERALD PUBLISHING CORP'N, 18 Vesey St., N. Y.

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HELEN C. CLIFFORD

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# ALICE'S BLIGHTED PROFESSION

## CHARACTERS

- ALICE.....*A young lawyer*
- DIANA.....*A fashionably dressed society woman*
- BELL.....*A nervous charity worker*
- MISS JOHNICKSTONER.....*A nervous stenographer*
- MISS CHICKENFENCER.....*A vivacious stenographer*
- MRS. BAXTER.....*A haughty society woman*
- MISS WORKER.....*A prayerful salvation-army lassie*
- MARY.....*An excitable suffragette*

TIME.—To-day. LOCALITY.—New York City.

TIME OF PLAYING.—50 minutes. ..

Curtain is dropped between Scene I and II for a few minutes to denote lapse of time.

## COSTUMES

Appropriate to the character portrayed.

JUL 26 1919

©J.D 52283

no 1

# Alice's Blighted Profession

SCENE.—*A modern business office. Center door, desk in center covered with paper and letters; four office chairs, telephone, rug, etc., as may be available.*  
DISCOVERED: ALICE seated at desk.

ENTER, C.D., DIANA.

DIANA. Well, Alice Berning, what do you mean by being indoors on such a beautiful day? Come, put on your wraps, my machine is——

ALICE. Diana, you are a regular steam engine. No, I cannot accept your kind invitation to go for a spin.

DIANA. Do you know what brought me here to-day? It was to ask you to accompany us on our tour through the north next week. *(Sits on arm of ALICE'S chair)* There's a dear. Say you will come. Why, you cannot imagine how disappointed Jack and I will be, not mentioning all our other guests, if you refuse.

ALICE. Really, Diana, I am very sorry to have to refuse. But I simply cannot go. Why, look at all this correspondence and no one but myself to answer it.

DIANA. Why don't you get a stenographer? Why not advertise?

ALICE. Oh, I've done that—I advertised for a stenographer, and, would you believe it, when I came down this morning there were at least twenty-five applicants outside my door clamoring to get in.

DIANA. And how did you get rid of them?

ALICE. I interviewed each one separately, but found not one qualified to do my work. I verily believe if I encounter another applicant like any of my last ones I shall close up shop and bury myself in the woods. *(Woe-begone look)*

DIANA *(fingering cards and papers on desk)*. Alice

Marie Jenkins Berning, what does this mean? Why there isn't anything on these so-called letters but meaningless words. Since when did Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Courld, Mr. Montemout and all these other society favorites become your clients? Ah-ah—the plot thickens—so Dick has been consulting you, too? I suppose he wishes to sue for a separation or something like that. (*Cries wildly*) Oh dear, oh dear!

ALICE. Diana, if you do not stop that nonsense you will spoil my practice. What will my clients think if they should come in and see you carrying on so?

DIANA (*sobs*). Oh, but my husband; to think he has deceived me so. Oh dear, oh dear!

ALICE. For goodness sake, stop! And how unlucky you should find out the real state of affairs.

DIANA (*brightly*). Come now, own up. You haven't had a client since you started, and these papers are only pretenses so that a promising client might think you prosperous.

ALICE (*sighs*). Well, I might as well own up. I certainly have had bad luck; but, never mind, my luck will change.

DIANA. Ah, dearie, when will you learn your lesson? You were never meant to battle and worry like this, and——

ALICE. I am *not*——

DIANA (*places hand over ALICE's mouth*). Now there, please do not interrupt me. Of course you are worrying; why there are tiny wrinkles forming across your brow, and before you know it your mouth will become a straight line and the sparkle will disappear from your dear eyes. Now come—give up this silly fad.

ALICE. Can't. When I started this, everyone was against me, especially father and Tom, and now that I've started I shall continue. But how I do wish for better business, and also for an office assistant.

DIANA. Well, (*Walks toward c.d.*) I've got a date with the dressmaker. I'm sorry you are so firm about this thing. Well, good-bye and good luck.

[EXIT c.d.]

ALICE. Well, it could not be avoided, (*Rearranges papers*) but I will *not* give it up. Why, I'm stationed here a month and not a client yet. (*Listens*) I do believe someone is coming toward this office. I must put on a business air. (*Through telephone; makes sure it does not ring*) Yes, I know—but you see business is so rushed now. (ENTER C.D. BELL) Well, I might consider it. Just a minute, please. (*To BELL*) Just be seated a minute, please. (*Through telephone*) As I was saying, I cannot consider it below \$5,000. . . . What's that? . . . I'm sorry, but my advice is always worth that. . . . No, not a cent less. . . .

BELL. I beg your—

ALICE (*waves BELL to silence; continues through telephone*). No, I cannot spare time now. . . . Yes, come over to-morrow. . . . Oh, about this time. . . . Good day. (*Writes*)

BELL. But I say—

ALICE. Just a minute, please, and then I'll attend to you. (*Writes, blots, folds*) Well, madam, what can I do for you?

BELL. Well—I—I—jus-t—just—

ALICE. Please, my time is valuable.

BELL. I just wanted to know if—if—you would contribute to the home for disabled animals?

ALICE (*gasps*). No, madam, I am not interested—in—animals. Good-day. (EXIT BELL, *nervously*, C.D.) Well, of all the nerve! And all that energy wasted.

ENTER MISS JOHNNICKSTONER, C.D.

ALICE. Well?

MISS JOHNNICKSTONER. I—I—came—in—answer to your advertisement.

ALICE. Take a seat, please. Now write your name and address. (MISS JOHNNICKSTONER *writes name*) Well, Miss Johnnickstoner, what is your average speed in stenography?

MISS JOHN. I—I—don't—do—not—know.

ALICE. Well, try. (*Dictates*) Dear Sir: We are in receipt of your favor of the 9th inst. Now with reference to your claim that— (MISS JOHNNICKSTONER *brings*

*handkerchief to face; sobs*) My dear—eh—Miss, what is the trouble?

MISS JOHN. I didn't get the word after receipt.

ALICE. We'll try again. Ready? (*Dictates*) Dear Sir: We are in receipt of your favor of the 9th inst. Now with reference to your—— (*MISS JOHNNICKSTONER stops; looks up at ALICE; sobs*) What now?

MISS JOHN. My point broke.

ALICE. Here's another. We'll continue now. (*Dictates*) —claim I would suggest that you would let it drop for the present. You know—— (*Long wail from MISS JOHNNICKSTONER*) Now this—is—too—bad. What is it this time?

MISS JOHN. I don't (*Sobs*) think I li-ke this work.

ALICE. Oh!

MISS JOHN. I think I'll be going—now—— Mamma —is waiting—for me—outside. [EXIT C.D.]

ALICE. Ah, the poor little darling and her *Mamma* waiting for her. Ugh!

ENTER MISS CHICKENFENCER, C.D.

MISS CHICKENFENCER. I believe I'm in the right place. I came in answer to your advertisement.

ALICE. Yes? Now, before we begin, are you addicted to crying?

MISS CHICKEN (*takes small powder puff from handbag; powders nose*). What a funny question. Well, you see, if the story is really sad, I shed a few tears. You know, the kind (*Dramatically*) where they are just about to be married, when he receives a letter from his father commanding him to come home—he goes but she remains; day by day she longs for him, and gradually fades away—and—just as she—is dying—her—long-lost—lost——

ALICE. I'm sorry, but really——

MISS CHICKEN. Oh, that's all right; I was almost finished anyway. (*Looks around office*) Say, I kind-a like this place. What are the wages?

ALICE. I start at \$20.

MISS CHICKEN. \$20? Well—I might consider it. What am I required to do?



ALICE. I suppose you can take dictation, also answer the telephone when I'm not here.

MISS CHICKEN. You bet I can. You should have——

ALICE. I'll dictate a little to you now.

MISS CHICKEN. Very well. Fire away.

ALICE (*dictates*). Dear Sir: We are in receipt of your——

MISS CHICKEN. Isn't it funny? Now at my last place, the boss said that word just like you, and because I corrected him he was furious.

ALICE. To which word do you refer?

MISS CHICKEN. Why, you said receipt instead of recipe.

ALICE. I prefer saying receipt. We shall continue now—(*Dictates*)—letter of the 6th inst. The claim you mentioned in your letter is one that will be hard to tackle.

MISS CHICKEN. Good gracious, I'm stuck. Say, how do you write that word? (*Thinks*) Oh, never mind, I know.

ALICE. You know that many of my clients have had similar cases, but I have had to refuse to take them. Although I would like to take your case I am afraid—(*MISS CHICKENFENCER throws pencil down*)—that I shall have to—— (*To MISS CHICKENFENCER*) Why are you not writing?

MISS CHICKEN. Goodness! you are a regular steam engine. Say, would you mind if I took off my coat and hat. I'm sure we'll become real intimate—(*Powders nose*)—and you sitting there all that time and not telling me that my nose was shiny.

ALICE. Are you finished? I hate to disturb you, but——

MISS CHICKEN. Oh, that's all right. Just a minute until I fix this dip. Say, isn't it awful when you wash your hair. I can't do a thing with mine. Now I have a friend whose hair is so——

ALICE. Really you must excuse me, but would you mind reading the letter as far as you have gone?

MISS CHICKEN. Certainly not. Here goes. (*Reads*)  
We are in recipe——

ALICE. Receipt.

MISS CHICKEN. —of your favor of the 6th inst. The clam——

ALICE. The what?

MISS CHICKEN. Clam.

ALICE. Oh!! Claim.

MISS CHICKEN. Oh, of course. (*Giggles*) How stupid of me. (*Reads*) —you mentioned in your letter is one that will be hard to tickle——

ALICE. Oh, lor——

MISS CHICKEN. You know that many of my giants——  
(*Telephone rings*)

ALICE (*through 'phone*). Hello—yes—who?—Miss Chickenfencer?—Why no, there is——

MISS CHICKEN. Hold on there. That's for me. (*Through 'phone*) Hello—Oh, it is you, Bob? Yes, I met him on Wall Street and told him where I was bound for. Go on! What are you trying to do? Oh. Bob stop. You know I did not. . . . I say I *did not*.

ALICE. My dear Miss——

MISS CHICKEN (*waves ALICE to silence*). That will be great. Oh, that's all right; this woman here is a perfect dear. I know she won't mind my taking this afternoon off.

ALICE. Well of all the nerve.

MISS CHICKEN. Well, about two o'clock? Very well —good-bye. (*Hangs up receiver*) Isn't he the sport? You should see him. Six feet two; dark eyes and hair; dances divinely, and, talk about giving you a good time, he is right there. How fortunate I am to have him ask me to-day when I was feeling so bored with being indoors—and, oh, the dance afterwards. Whew! Oh, I could hug you to death, you old dear, to let me off like this to enjoy myself. (*Dances around stage*) Something great is going to happen to-day. I feel it. Just think, first I am employed here, and now Bob is going to take me out——

ALICE. I'm sorry, that——

MISS CHICKEN. There, there, all right. I know you're going to say you are so sorry that it is not a nicer day. Oh, but we do not mind the weather in the least. (*Looks in mirror*) Goodness! this mirror is too small. Tell me, is my hat on at the right angle? Oh, I guess it is all right. (*Walks to door*) I'll see you to-morrow at 10 o'clock. That's the time, is it not?

ALICE. My dear young lady, you need not come back at—

MISS CHICKEN. You are too kind hearted. And I never take advantage of kindness. Of course I'll come back to-morrow. You were just going to say I need not come back until to-morrow afternoon. The idea, leaving you to answer all this correspondence. (*Looks at watch*) Good gracious, I must be off. It's half-past one. Now don't work too hard. Good-bye! [EXIT C.D.]

(ALICE, overcome, sinks in chair; throws up hands)

CURTAIN

SCENE II:—*Same as SCENE I.*

ALICE. Well, if that Miss Chickenfencer comes back I shall have to send for the police reserves to take her away. Of all the people I've ever met she is the limit. Can you imagine anyone being so— (*'Phone rings*) Hello—Yes—Here I am on the wire. . . . Who is this? Oh, Miss Chickenfencer. . . . What's that? You'll be back when? . . . Speak louder, please. . . . Oh, good gracious, don't scream. . . . Oh, you won't come back. (*Aside*) Thank the Lord! (*Through 'phone*) Very well—I am sure you will be happy. . . . Yes, he also. (*Aside*) God help the poor man. (*Through 'phone*) I'm busy now— (*Lays receiver down; picks up pen; writes; takes up receiver*) Good-bye. I was just in time to bid her good-bye. I wonder what she was saying all that time, and she just married?

ENTER C.D. MISS PRUNE (*DIANA disguised*).

ALICE. Hello, what have we here?

MISS PRUNE. Pardon, madame. (*Bows low*) I believe I have the pleasure to address the young lady advertising for a stenographer.

ALICE (*aside*). I'm in for it again. I suppose this is the applicant. (*To MISS PRUNE*) Yes, I have the painful privilege to inform you that before you is the woman who is in sore need of a helping hand.

MISS PRUNE. May I be seated?

ALICE. Certainly.

MISS PRUNE. I wonder what good fortune directed my steps towards you. You see I was between two minds (*Sews*) whether to accept this position—

ALICE (*aside*). She is mine already.

MISS PRUNE. . . .—or whether to take that of a secretary to a young man. But I said to myself, if there is a woman, noble and upright enough to earn her own living without depending on mere man, it is my duty as one of her sex to plod along with her in her courageous career. So I refused the other position and came I to thee.

ALICE. But, my dear madam, I am afraid you did a

foolish thing. Know you not that a secretary's position pays better than that of an office assistant? The latter is all I require.

MISS PRUNE. When you speak like that to me, you make the tears of sorrow gush forth from my eyes. (*Applies handkerchief to eyes; ALICE smiles*) Do you think money is the only thing worth while? Ah, no! (*Stands; very dramatically*) I care *nothing* for money. It is to *help* to do *something noble* that I crave. (*Hand over heart*) It is here, *here*, that I feel that there will come a day when my name, Dewdrop Mehitable Prune, shall tremble on every lip. I shall be honored and obeyed. And (*To ALICE*) why will I be distinguished and honored? Because of my noble nature and willing ways. I should shrink from taking one penny of yours to pay me for services rendered you in your hour of need.

ALICE. I am afraid, then, that you have come to the wrong party. I am not great enough myself, never mind enabling you to attain your noble heights.

MISS PRUNE. Say no more about it. Here I am, and here I intend staying. Pay me what you will; but I shall continue to maintain this lofty position.

ALICE (*aside*). I fear she is crazy, but, I believe, harmless. (*To MISS PRUNE*) Would you mind if I inquired of you your accomplishments?

MISS PRUNE. My talents are varied. I am well versed in literature and consider myself a girl of wide erudition. I can perform a little on the harp and piano. My voice—

ALICE. Just a minute, please. I suppose you can dance, sing, flirt, cook, paint, etc., but can you take dictation, answer the telephone, and attend to an office in general?

MISS PRUNE. Yes, ma'am.

ALICE. Well, then, I shall have to leave you for the present in charge here. I have an appointment. Now listen, I want it thoroughly understood that you are to treat all visitors with the deepest respect. Make them feel at home, and keep them here until I return. Now

remember my directions, please. (EXIT ALICE C.D. MISS PRUNE *clears table; does away with all papers*)

ENTER MRS. BAXTER C.D.

MRS. BAXTER. Is Miss Berning in?

MISS PRUNE. Oh, no, she has just gone out. But come right in and sit down; she will be back directly. (*Dusts chair for MRS. BAXTER; sits opposite her; sews*) Isn't it warm to-day? This morning I was down to the market and I am that tired. But it was worth it. Why I got the sweetest butter for 30 cents and a dandy head of cabbage for 4 cents; imagine that, 4 cents. How much do you pay for cheese?

MRS. BAXTER. Really—I haven't the slightest idea what my *servant* pays for it.

MISS PRUNE. Well, now, isn't that too bad? Now if you knew, perhaps I could help you to buy it cheaper. Tell your servant to go down to Mulligan's market on Second Avenue, and you will be surprised at the results.

MRS. BAXTER. I haven't the least doubt. Will you please tell Miss Berning that I called. Here's my card. (*Walks to C.D.*)

MISS PRUNE. But where are you going? You must wait until Miss Berning returns. Come now, let me take your hat and coat and make yourself comfortable. (*Pushes MRS. BAXTER into chair*)

MRS. BAXTER (*furious*). Will you kindly tell me the meaning of this? I command you to open that door and let me pass out.

MISS PRUNE. Now there, don't get excited. I have my orders to make visitors comfortable and I intend to carry them out. (*Telephone rings; MISS PRUNE looks around for button*) I suppose that is another visitor. I'll tick the button. (*Pushes button on wall; loud report; both jump*)

MRS. BAXTER. Good gracious, what are you trying to do, kill——

MISS PRUNE. Oh, that's all right; the old bell is out of order. But never mind. Here, (*Hands large book to*

MRS. BAXTER) make yourself comfortable while I stand at the door to welcome the approaching guest. (*Stands at c.d.; looks up and down*)

MRS. BAXTER (*aside*). Oh Lord, she must be mad. If I try to escape I shudder to think of the results. (*Telephone rings loud and long*)

MISS PRUNE. Why don't she come up, whoever she is? I can't go down to her. (*Telephone rings*) Now this is too bad, the poor bo——

MRS. BAXTER (*edging away*). Perhaps if you take up that receiver (*Points to 'phone*) that ringing will cease.

MISS PRUNE (*crosses to 'phone*). Well now, who'd ever have thought it was this ringing? (*Through 'phone*) Hello—*Hell-O—Yes—Yes—Yes*. She'll be right back. . . . Well, in about an hour's time. (MRS. BAXTER *frightened*) Hold the wire then until she returns. Call soon again. Good luck to you. (ENTER MISS WORKER) Well, how-do-you-do? Come right in. Here, be seated. Let me take your hat——

MISS WORKER. But I say——

MISS PRUNE. Now don't say a word. Make yourself comfortable. Are you acquainted with this woman? (MRS. BAXTER) No? Oh, goodness, what is your name? Oh, never mind, I've got your card. Mrs. John Baxter, meet—oh, what is your name? (MISS WORKER) Nevertheless, pull your chair up closer to Mrs. Baxter and engage in conversation. I've got a letter to write.

MISS WORKER. This is indeed a pleasure to meet one who is so well known in society. I presume you are Mrs. Baxter, the wife of Senator Baxter?

MRS. BAXTER (*cuttingly*). You are correct in your supposition.

MISS WORKER. Perhaps, then, you can help me in my work by contributing to a new home being erected for homeless men.

MRS. BAXTER. Really! I am not interested.

MISS WORKER. Surely you will not refuse money for such a noble cause. Why just this past winter we have housed——

MRS. BAXTER (*yawns*). I have no doubt. If you go

around to my residence, my secretary shall attend to you.

MISS WORKER. Oh, but how much better would it be to receive it direct from you. Just think of the benefits and blessings that God would shower down upon you if you gave with your own hands out of a charitable heart a few of your earthly goods.

MRS. BAXTER (*yawns*). Really I am sure it would be delightful. But I have told you what to do; so do it or not, just as you wish.

MISS WORKER. Ah, my dear Mrs. Baxter, I cannot believe——

ENTER MARY C.D.

MARY. Hello, everyone. Where's Miss Berning?

MISS PRUNE. Not in at present. But make yourself at home.

MARY. Don't speak to me of home. Home is only a figure of speech. Why who ruins the home of to-day? (*Excited*) It is man, *man*, MAN; it is MAN ruining everything. Why did we have such a hard time to get the vote? It was because he will have to part with some of his ruining ways. I say, give me freedom of vote or give me DEATH.

MISS PRUNE. Well—well—then be—eh—make yourself comfortable.

MARY. How can I be comfortable, when all around me I see women stretching forth their hands to us to help them, now that we got the vote? They work and slave for *man* and what does he do for them in return? NOTHING. (*MISS PRUNE and MISS WORKER both jump; MRS. BAXTER bored*) They are paid a few dollars but nothing more. Were we allowed to *direct*, to have a *voice* in the Government? *No*. We were good enough as playthings, helpmates or slaves for man, but when it came to anything higher we were scoffed down. Oh, now that we've got the vote we will show them. I ask you (*To MISS PRUNE*) are we not man's *equal* in *everything*?

MISS PRUNE. I—I—guess so. (*MRS. BAXTER amused; MISS WORKER nervous*)



MARY. Ah, you make me sick. (*Shakes MISS PRUNE*) Wake up! Get some spunk into you! Demand your rights! Speak up! Have some aim in life! Don't you ever want to raise yourself higher, become someone who will be well worth knowing?

MISS PRUNE. Ye—yes, ma'am.

MARY. Well, you never will be if you act like this. (*Turns suddenly*) Oh, Mrs. Baxter, how-do-you-do? Why, when did you come in?

MRS. BAXTER. About two hours ago.

MARY. You don't mean to tell me that you were here all that time and I not seeing you? Well, well, isn't that funny? But, by the way, Mrs. Baxter, are you still of the same idea regarding Woman Suffrage?

MRS. BAXTER. I still maintain what I have told you over and over again. A woman's place is in her home. (*Yawns*) To be candid, it would, indeed, bore me to have to vote, and broaden my mind, as you say. I have so many social affairs to attend I really find no time for your clubs.

MARY. You are too lazy. All you are good for is to—

MRS. BAXTER (*stamps foot*). How dare you insult me like that. I am my own mistress, and I can do as I please. What do you do? You go around demanding your rights, while your hus—

MARY (*excited*). I will *not* have a mean, gossiping woman like you, who would much rather go around to— (*MISS PRUNE enjoying it*)

MISS WORKER (*comes between two*). For shame! (*Prayerful attitude*) Oh Lord, forgive them. It would be better for both of you to go your own way without molesting one another.

MRS. BAXTER. Yes, I intend going my way. But I *insist* upon an apology from this woman.

MARY. Why should I apologize to you? Ah, my cause, my noble cause! (*Stands on chair*) Three cheers for Woman Suffrage and may she rule from one corner of the earth to the other! Hurrah! *Hurrah!* HURRAH!

MRS. BAXTER (*opposite*). Three cheers for the Antis!

Hurrah! *Hurrah!* HURRAH! [EXIT C.D. MISS WORKER

ENTER ALICE C.D., *horrified*; MISS PRUNE *hides*.

ALICE. Why, Mary and Mrs. Baxter, what does this mean? (MRS. BAXTER *and* MARY *both run to* ALICE)

MRS. BAXTER. Oh, my dear Alice, on which side are you? For it or against it?

MARY (*scornfully*). Of course she is on my side. She has too much brains to be on yours.

MRS. BAXTER. How dare you? Do you mean to insinuate——

ALICE. Oh, come now. Stop this quarreling. To tell the truth, I am neutral.

TOGETHER (MRS. BAXTER *and* MARY *glaring at one another*) There.

ALICE. But, tell me, what brought you here?

MRS. BAXTER. I just dropped in to ask you to attend a dinner party this evening.

MARY. She will *not go*. She is coming with me. (*Puts arm around* ALICE) There's a dear. Won't you come to the lecture given by Dr. Weeks this evening on "What Woman Will Do With the Vote"?

ALICE. I'll tell you what I will do. I shall go to neither place. Come now, you two shake hands and be good friends.

MRS. BAXTER. I will n——

ALICE. For the land's sake, why keep up this pretense any longer? You know right well, Mary, that you are dying to know where Mrs. Baxter bought her new hat. (MRS. BAXTER *and* MARY *look at one another; both laugh*)

MARY. You are right, Alice. Although we rave and clamor for our rights, we are still *only* women down deep in our hearts.

MRS. BAXTER. And, although I try to make people think I would not be bothered about Woman's Rights, I am still enough of a woman not to want a man to get anything over on me. Well, come along, Mary; I have a new gown to show you.

MRS. BAXTER. } Good-bye, Alice dear, wish you luck.  
 MARY. }

[EXIT MRS. BAXTER and MARY C.D., *chatting gaily*

ALICE. Well, those two are beyond me. A few minutes ago they were fighting like two bitter enemies, and now they go off like two of the best friends. Well, strange things do happen. (*Turns to table*) Oh dear, what has happened to my stenographer and—*oh!—oh!*—where have my papers and letters disappeared to? (*Spies MISS PRUNE in corner*) So, there you are. Will you kindly tell me the meaning of this? What have you done with my papers?

MISS PRUNE. Burned them.

ALICE. You have what? Do you realize that they were important legal documents? (*Falls in chair; covers face with hand*) Oh dear, oh dear, what shall I do. I guess I might as well give it all up.

MISS PRUNE. Good!

ALICE. Why, what do you mean?

MISS PRUNE. *This.* (*Removes make-up*)

ALICE. *Diana?*

DIANA. At your service, mum.

ALICE. Explain!

DIANA. It is simply this. When I left your office yesterday I was bound to have you come with us by hook or by crook, so, very much depressed in spirits, I walked into the club and who should I meet there but two of my old school-mates. Instantly I thought of this plan, and to bring back school-day memories they promised to help me. My beloved school chums were to apply for the position you had open and I would also. So, my dear, Miss Johnickstoner, the first applicant, happens to be Miss Marie Hopkins, daughter of the mayor of Koscoe, the second applicant, Miss Chickenfencer, was the most dare-devil girl in our school, Miss Rose Fishby, and the third stands before you.

ALICE. Well, of all the nerve! I must say you had little to do to play such a joke on me.

DIANA (*arm around ALICE*). There now, cheer up. You know you are dying to laugh and vow it was a clever

way to make you give up this silly fad. Of course, I am sure of your coming now.

ALICE. Indeed. (*Laughs*) Well, I must admit you certainly played the game high. I suppose I simply must give in. But, oh dear, how I shall be laughed at.

DIANA. All you have got to do is to laugh also. You know the old saying, "Laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone."

ALICE. But, Mrs. Baxter, what will she say when she finds this out?

DIANA (*laughs*). Oh, some day I shall act for you the part Mrs. Baxter played in this tragedy. My, but her dignity was taken down a bit.

ALICE. I can imagine.

DIANA. The only thing I regret is the impression we gave you of stenographers. I must admit we did exaggerate a little. But, you see, if we acted as real stenographers, you would be so pleased and contented with your lot that you would never consent to give it up.

ALICE (*sighs*). But, oh, I can just picture father and Jack referring to this, in a burst of laughter, as "Alice's Blighted Profession."

(*Both look at one another; laugh*)

CURTAIN

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